REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of September 27, 2006.

Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-17, and 19-30 are pending. Claims 1, 8, 9, 11, and 13 are amended. New claim 30 is added.

The Office Action

The previously indicated allowability of claims 12-13 has been withdrawn.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,225,566 to Dienst.

Claims 1-4, 6-7, 12, 15-17, 19-21, 23, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,704,750 to Bartos, et al. in view of Dienst.

Claims 8-9 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartos, et al. in view of Dienst and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,535,656 to Orban.

Claims 14, 22, and 24-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartos, et al. in view of Dienst(?) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,580,689 to Slater.

Claims 10 and 11 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but are considered to be allowable over the prior art of record.

For the reasons outlined below, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 now recites a retention element integrally formed with the support panel and of the same material, as supported by paragraph [0014] of the specification, as filed.

Claim 1 is rejected over Dienst and also over a combination of Dienst with Bartos.

Dienst discloses a spacer 20, 50 in the form of a cylindrically-shaped sleeve 22 having a through hole 24 which defines a longitudinal axis. The sleeve has an outer core portion 30, 52 formed of a hard plastic and an inner core portion 32, 54 formed of a resilient elastic material. The inner core portion may include ridges 56 (FIGS. 7 and 8). The ridges resiliently grasp the shaft of a screw to hold the shaft snugly therein.

Dienst makes no suggestion of a retention element integrally formed with a support panel. Rather the spacer 50 of Dienst is a separate element from the circuit board 42. Further, Dienst makes no suggestion of forming the spacer of the same material as a circuit board. Forming the spacer of the same material as the circuit board would defeat the object of Dienst which is to provide an outer hard portion to withstand compressive forces and an inner softer core to resiliently grasp the screw.

Bartos discloses a screw with tapered threads. FIGURE 3 shows the screw attached to a boss 24 having a tapered bore 22. The Examiner once again argues that FIGURE 3 shows a protrusion extending from the sidewall. The Examiner *still* has not identified any protrusion in the boss of FIGURE 3 of Bartos, and Applicant has not found any reference to protrusions in the specification.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to add the rib design of Dienst in Bartos for the purpose of providing more friction. However, there is no motivation for combining Dienst with Bartos. The two systems operate entirely differently. Dienst requires a nut to couple the screw 44 to the circuit board 42. In contrast, Bartos uses a self-tapping screw which penetrates the plastic boss. (see col. 1, lines 32-35 and 51-55). Without this penetration, the screw would not be retained by the boss 24 of Bartos, since there is no nut to hold the screw. The ridges of Dienst resiliently deform rather than accepting threads. Adding the soft, resilient ridges of Dienst to the boss of Bartos would not provide an increased grip by providing friction, as the Examiner contends, but would prevent the self-tapping screw of Bartos from forming a thread in the boss to hold the screw in place and thus defeat the object of Bartos.

Slater, cited against claim 14, does not supply the deficiencies of the primary reference(s). There is no suggestion in Slater of a projection extending into the bore from a sidewall thereof.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1, and claims 2-4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 29 dependent therefrom, distinguish patentably and unobviously over the references of record.

Claim 7 recites a support member which includes a retention element for use in mounting an associated component to the support panel, the retention element defining a bore for receiving an associated threaded fixing element which mounts the component to

the support panel and a protrusion which extends into the bore from a sidewall thereof, the bore including a first portion located adjacent to a fixing element receiving opening of the bore and a second portion, spaced from the opening, the second portion having a smaller diameter than the first portion, and the protrusion extending in the first and second portions of the bore.

Dienst and Bartos do not disclose or fairly suggest such support element.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to add the rib design of Dienst in Bartos for the purpose of providing more friction. However, as discussed for claim 1, the addition of the soft, resilient ridges of Dienst to the boss of Bartos would destroy the invention of Bartos by preventing the tapping mechanism, which is essential to the operation of Bartos. Rather than being tapped, the resilient ridges of Dienst would simply deform.

Slater, cited against claim 27, does not supply the deficiencies of the primary references. There is no suggestion in Slater of a projection as claimed.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 7 and claim 27 dependent therefrom, distinguish over the references of record.

Claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 9 and 10. In view of the allowability of claim 10, it is considered that claim 8, and claims 11, 13, and 28 dependent therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 16 recites a combination of a retention element and a fixing element. The retention element includes a projection comprising a rib which extends generally parallel with a longitudinal axis of the bore. A threaded fixing element which is received by the bore is capable of forming a helical groove in the bore. The projection engages a threaded portion of the fixing element as the threaded fixing element is threadably engaged with the groove.

As noted above, it would not have been obvious to add the ridges of Dienst in Bartos for the purpose of providing more friction since it would destroy the invention of Bartos. Thus, there is no motivation for combining Dienst with Bartos.

Slater, cited against claim 27, does not supply the deficiencies of the primary references. There is no suggestion in Slater of a rib as claimed.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 16, and claims 17, 19-24, and 30 dependent therefrom, distinguish over the references of record.

Claim 25 recites a method of clamping a component to a support member which includes inserting a threaded portion of a fixing member through an aperture in the component and into a bore defined by the support member and rotating the fixing member relative to the bore such that a helical groove is formed in the bore, a projection extending into the bore from a sidewall thereof and engaging the threaded portion upon reinsertion of a fixing member, the projection comprising a rib which extends generally parallel with a longitudinal axis of the bore.

It is not clear from the Office Action which combination of references is being used in rejecting claim 25, since the Examiner rejects claim 25 over "Bartos, et al. as modified, as applied to claims 1, 8, 23, and 25 above" and further in view of Slater. Applicant assumes that the Examiner is applying Dienst, Bartos, and Slater. If this is not correct, the Examiner is asked to clarify the rejection in the next Office Action.

There is no motivation for combining Dienst with Bartos and Slater. As noted above, the combination of Dienst with Bartos would destroy the invention of Bartos. Additionally, the soft, resilient material of the Dienst ridges would prevent a helical groove being formed in the bore, as presently claimed, since it would merely deform slightly.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 25, and claim 26 dependent therefrom, distinguish over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 1, 4, 6-17, and 19-30) are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he/she is hereby authorized to call the undersigned, at Telephone Number (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

FAY, SHARPE, FAGAN,
MINNICH & McKEE, LLP

October 11, 2006
Date

Ann M. Skerry, Reg. No. 45,655
1100 Superior Avenue, 7th Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-2579
(216) 861-5582

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